

October 3, 1961

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MEMORANDUM TO MR. MCGEORGE BUNDY

From: Henry A. Kissinger

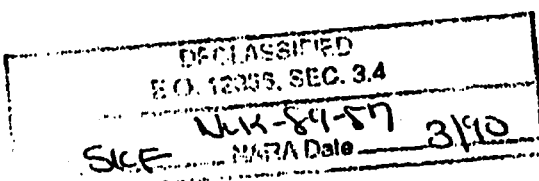
In our conversation about NATO, I am not sure there was sufficient time to make my point fully clear. I do not agree with Norstad as against Acheson. I am in the unfortunate position of disagreeing with both to some extent.

My disagreement with Acheson is that he has never developed an adequate rationale for the conventional build-up. He has been liable to the interpretation that he wants to substitute conventional for nuclear weapons, but the force goals he suggests are so patently inadequate that ammunition has been given to his opponents. Moreover, his acceptance of MC-70 in effect accepts the rationale of the previous Administration. This makes it easy for Norstad to sabotage any dramatic change in strategic planning. Finally, the Acheson approach pays insufficient attention to the psychological situation in Europe. The European obsession with nuclear weapons--which to be fair was inspired by us--can in my judgment not be overcome by subterfuge, but only by a strategic concept in which both nuclear and conventional weapons have their place.

As for Norstad, I sense that he does not believe in any conventional capability. He considers it almost entirely a trigger for nuclear weapons. His deployment and strategic concept will make it very hard for the President to control military operations after hostilities start.

My view is that we need a substantial conventional build-up on the Continent. But we cannot achieve it without a rationale for the nuclear establishment. We also need a system of control which can give the President confidence that a war can be kept conventional as long as he chooses to.

These were my misgivings about the trend of events in May. They remain my misgivings today.



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